1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 246 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 241 [407 556] No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it, and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

221 241 251 With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year draws to a close. Through October and November turnips and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it [492] has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with November cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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351

A JAUNTING CAR "FACES THE ROAD"

[facing p. 148]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets.

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just beginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Plate III

342
[492]
[493]

THATCHED ROOF SECURED WITH PEGGED FIR-ROPES

N. ANTRIM

SCOLLOP THATCH OF MARROM GRASS

MAGILLIGAN CO. DERRY

ROPED THATCH OF RYE STRAW

ARTICLAVE, CO. DERRY

[FACING P. 57]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER X.

SEEDTIME.

Except in a few districts where winter wheat is grown the farmer's year may be said to begin in spring when, from February on, the land is ploughed or dug for the new crops. Several arguments are advanced against autumn ploughing—that the land is too wet and that the winter destroys the seed-bed—but as with many other things the preference is best explained by deep-rooted custom. So long as the land was held in rundale autumn ploughing was out of the question since the stock had the run of the whole townland after Hallowe'en.

We have very little information about old Irish ploughs. Owing to the fact that they were made almost entirely of wood archæology cannot help us much, but shaped stones that may have been shares and coulters have been found, and plough-irons do sometimes turn up. The discovery by Dr. O'Neill Hencken of a large iron coulter in the Ballinderry crannog shows that a heavy plough necessitating a big team had reached Co. Westmeath by the 10th century A.D. Pipe-rolls of the 13th century refer to plough teams of 8 oxen in Co. Meath: this was the normal complement under the English three-field system. At the other end of the scale, as it were, there survived into living memory along the west coast the custom of attaching the horse to the plough or harrows by the tail, and although the practice was severely condemned it had the advantage that the horse would stop if the plough

[p. 87]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 407 [492] struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised. [476 171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing" which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rotation grass is referred to as upland hay to distinguish it from meadow hay, although in fact it often grows at lower levels. Sometimes at this stage the hay is hung on bushes and fences something after the Scandinavian manner.

When sufficiently dry the laps are opened and the hay piled into small cocks (ricks or lumps), and this process is repeated a number of times if the weather is bad until the stage of large hand-cocks is reached, or, if the hay is in good condition, even larger "tramp-cocks," trodden down firmly. The cocks are tied down with a hay-rope made on the spot (Fig. 50) and left "to season" for a period which may be only a week or two but which, to the stranger, seems generally an unconscionable time. In this matter the Irish

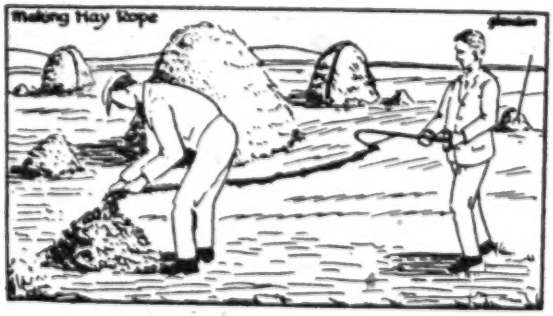

Fig. 50.

are confirmed in what the English call their lazy ways. Admittedly there are dry years when it would do no harm to the hay to stack it at once, but the Irish method is adapted to the average season, and rooted in a firmly-fixed rota of farm work. In August the turf must be carried home while the bogs are firm enough to take the carts, and in many parts the busy time of flax-pulling and retting is come. Although these alternative demands on the farmer's time are not always present, they may have helped in the past to standardize the rotation of work. Moreover, when the opportunity of carry-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Antrim

SLIDE CAR WITH KISH ; STRAW HARNESS

LOW-BACK CAR

BOX-CAR WITH DISC WHEELS

Plate IV.
ALL FROM GLENS OF ANTRIM

SPOKE-WHEELED CAR

[facing p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

482 burden in Ireland as among other peasantries. The burden-
rope, constructed of rushes, horse-hair or grass-rope (Chap.
[283] 14 and Figs. 79 & 80), was employed for carrying surpris-
ingly large loads of hay, corn or bushes—" as much as a pony
could draw," I have been told—while the burden-creel, slung
over one shoulder or worn like a rucksack by women who
would thus have their hands free for knitting, was mainly used
for carrying turf. Nor should we omit the wheel-barrow, both
[493] box and turf types (Chapter 15 and Fig. 90), the hand
barrow (for loads of stones and also for fish and nets) and the
two-man turf creel (Fig. 91).

493
492 Side-creels are the panniers attached to an ass or small
pony. Most of them are constructed with a hinged bottom
so that the contents of turf, wrack, gravel or manure are
automatically unloaded (Fig. 58). The sides are broken by
ornamental " windows " which give a handhold for lifting and
help to lighten the creel. Comparative study would reveal
several regional and specialized forms of creel, and I have
observed different methods of attachment even in neighbouring
valleys. They are generally slung on wooden pegs driven
into a roof-shaped crutch or straddle (Fig. 56) which rests on
two straw mats. In the example figured from Tuam (Fig. 57)
the straw mats are pegged together, and the straddle is
strengthened by two osier ties, to one of which the tail-sugán
is fastened. When hay or corn is being carried the creels may
be dispensed with and the " bottles " or sheaves hung on the
straddle pegs with an osier ring. Alternatively the creels are
tied together with ropes which pass over a thick straw pad laid
along the animal's spine, and the straddle is not used. The
creels are D-shaped and can be made of openwork, for turf
or wrack, or of closely-woven sides for manure. We shall
have something more to say about their construction in
Chapter 14.

Fig. 56.

493 Among horse-drawn vehicles the sledge or slipe is very
generally employed for transporting stones, manure, or turf
and also for conveying the plough and harrows from one field
to another. I illustrate the common slipe of Co. Antrim

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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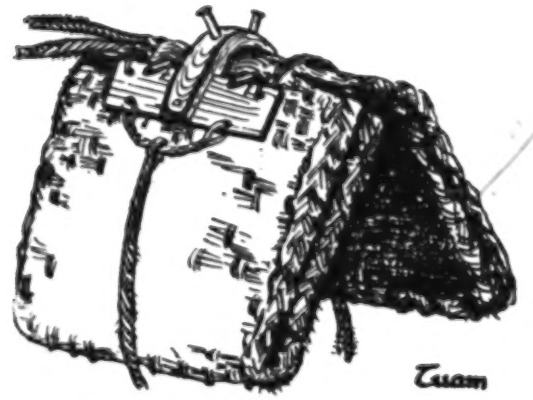

Straw pads & straddle for Creels

Fig. 57.

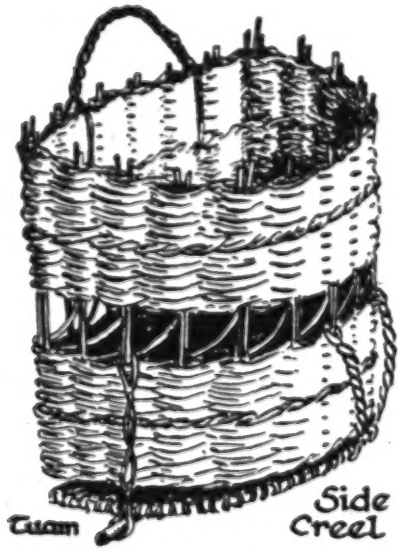

Fig. 58.

[p. 107]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 (Fig. 59): the type used for drawing manure in Co. Down has the runners set close together so that it can be easily tipped over to empty. An even simpler sledge described as a "triangular framework" is said to have been used for dragging boulders out of fields. I have not seen this, but a similar "forked runner sledge" is known in Sweden.

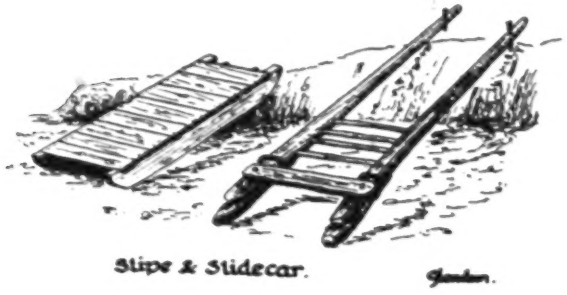

Fig. 59.

The slide-car (Fig. 59), now confined to a few hilly districts such as the Antrim Glens, was almost universal a century ago. It consists of two strong poles or shafts—bog timber was often used for the purpose—the ends of which slide on the ground. Attached to the ends by wooden pegs and an iron ring (called the "bowman") are short pieces of hardwood which take the wear and tear, though nowadays thin iron runners are often substituted. The shafts are tied together by cross-beams making a rough platform on which rests the wicker "kish," resembling the smaller creels but oval in shape, and like them, adapted to carry either turf or manure. For other loads such as hay or timber the kish is dispensed with. Although they will carry but small weights they can be taken on the roughest of moorland tracks and down slopes of incredible steepness. 492 The harness of the slide-car pony was until recent years 493 made entirely of wood and straw apart from a bit and halter for leading purposes. The straw collar (Chapter 14) was fitted with wooden hames attached to the shafts by short sugán

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

traces. The shafts were also tied by straw ropes to the pegs of a straddle which rested on a back sugán secured in turn by a tail rope of straw. Bridles and halters were sometimes made of horse hair.

The slide car, like so many of the Irish relics we are considering, was found not long ago in the Scottish Highlands and is still used in central Wales. It is common in the Baltic lands and far afield through the mountain country of Europe and the Siberian tundra; and its wide and scattered distribution betokens its high antiquity. In general the slide car is employed for transporting hay and timber in mountain country; and it is of interest to find that in Sweden it is

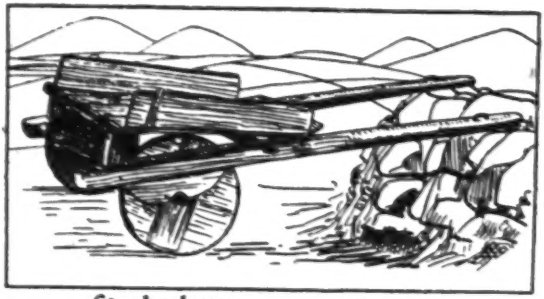

Fig. 60.

especially associated with the mountain dairies which are paralleled by the Irish booleys (Chapter 6). Scandinavian ethnologists have shown how areas which had the slide-car have become regions of the one-horse cart and have generally remained without the four-wheeled waggon. This applies with peculiar force to Ireland. (Pl. IV.)

The older style of two-wheeled cart is that known as the "wheel" or "low-back" car, which survives in the same environments as the slide-car. I illustrate an example from the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down (Fig. 60). The solid disc wheels lie under the body of the car and are fixed to an axle,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 80.

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a " tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way : some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or " mell "), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply : finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. " Langles " and " burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface: turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4 by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches. The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards" when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed (Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

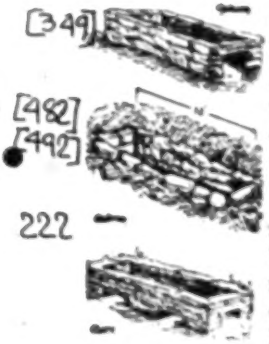
9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.



Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

415 The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps,
352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft
231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

[491] 6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are
492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried
[482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a sideways posture, the men not riding astride.

[243] The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

501 For water transport there are a good many boats of various
[505] descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage-car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse, a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in, and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

231 is said to be due to the expense of importing feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
● [492] nemara ponies are kept as draft animals, and almost everything is conveyed in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was made in 1907 by a local carpenter from one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required, including lobster pots, fishing nets, furniture, doors, windows, and hand barrows, which consist of two shafts joined by slats and a single wheel in the rear, all of wood.

221 Digging and manuring of the land begins in late February, and seaweed is brought from the shore as needed. The potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's Day (March 17); oats, two to three weeks later; barley and mangolds at the end of April or in May. Most calves are born from March to May. In dry years peat is cut from May onwards, laid out to dry, and eventually stacked in ricks six feet high secured by large stones, or placed against a stone wall. Apart from routine work, there is little to do until the hay harvest, generally in August or September, though sometimes a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with the hope of a second crop in the autumn. Oats and barley are harvested in September, after which the main potato digging takes place, though some are dug earlier for the household. From October to late February, there is little to do except tend the stock, though some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under government schemes. Few farmers make the ricks of peat beside their houses so commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major aim of the Congested Districts Board, and from the eighteen-nineties to the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of a rath (farmstead) at Lissue, Co. Antrim, in 1946.[1] Its barrel-shaped body has the unusual refinement of an oval mouth, designed for pouring, with an iron rim-mount over which a cloth could be tied. A central iron band has two rings attached, evidently for suspension. A century ago, that is a thousand years after the Lissue churn was in use, we know that butter was made not far away on the shores of Lough Neagh by swinging the churn to and fro, suspended from the roof timbers. The Lissue churn could also have been used to carry milk from the summer pastures to the homestead. There are stories in the Mourne Mountains of milk transported in this way which would turn to butter by the automatic churning of the rough journey home from the hills. Evidently the lidless churn is the older type, and I have seen large specimens in Donegal. It was presumably from a churn of this kind, slung from a pony's back, that the Donegal child was observed 'peeping and screeching' as the pastoral cavalcade moved up to the summer booleys in the days before the Great Famine.[2]

The simplest form of churn dash, found along the west coast, terminates in a wooden cross. A similar Norwegian dasher has the ends of the cross joined with a sally ring, and a rope of cowhair is said to have been used for the purpose in Scotland. It was considered lucky to have the cross-pieces made of two different woods; indeed everything about the churn had to be made 'right'. In the whole business of handling milk luck was more important than labour, and butter-making in particular was a task fraught with unseen dangers. Often the butter would mysteriously refuse to break, and many were the precautions taken and the remedies sought. It seems that the old Irish method was to churn from the whole milk, and it was customary until recently to pour the skim milk into the churn along with the risen cream. It should be remembered, too, that the butterfat content was low, and that since many peasant farmers had no more than one cow at a time in milk, its quality would be more variable than the milk of a large herd. The unaccountable variations in the success of churning were widely attributed to the intervention of witches or fairies.

[1] G. Bersu, *U.J.A.*, X (1947), 50–58.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

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1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[Facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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seen on the small farms until after the Great Famine: 'the things called ploughs would only scratch the surface, a log of wood sharpened and shod with iron'.[1] This 'poorer sort of plough' was made of alder in Co. Londonderry.[2] Observers attributed the Irish addiction to cross-ploughing to the fact that the ribs of unploughed land could only be broken by this means. Small squarish cultivation plots and fields are a natural consequence of cross-ploughing.

It seems that even these light ploughs, quite incapable of penetrating lea ground, were pulled by three or four horses abreast, 'so weak and small are the horses'.[3] Thus 'coaring' (coaration) was necessary, though one suspects that tradition rather than need lay behind the large teams. In the seventeenth century four horses abreast pulled the plough by the tails in Co. Clare, 'which was the custom all over Ireland. The tackle and traces being made of gadds or withies of twigs twisted, would be broken to pieces otherwise . . . . But the horses being sensible stop until the ploughman lifts the plough over the rock.'[4] At the same time we find complaints from the midland counties that the native plough was 'heavy and unmanageable, distressing to men and horses.[5] Here we probably have to deal with the descendant of the heavy Anglo-Norman plough.

Unfortunately we have no details of the Irish *ard*. One would like to know, for instance, whether it turned the furrow or rather threw the earth—for it merely scratched the soil—to the left or to the right. It has been found that in certain parts of western Europe left-sided ploughs are traditional whereas, of course, the common plough is almost universally right-sided. Mr. Robert Aitken has traced the left-sided plough in a clearly defined area of south France and north-east Spain.[6] The explanation may be that in these areas cultivation was originally done with a foot plough, for which the right foot was used, so that the soil, as with the Scottish caschrom, was turned to the left, and that the plough when adopted became a traction-

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland* (1880), 20.
[2] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 290.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. Sligo.
[4] *Dineley's Tour in Ireland* (1681), Ed. J. Graves, (1870), 162.
[5] W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. King's Co. and Queen's Co.
[6] R. Aitken, *Man*, 1953, 286.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield.

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes—formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall.

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piecework. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1]

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 12

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1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

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2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public
493 charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

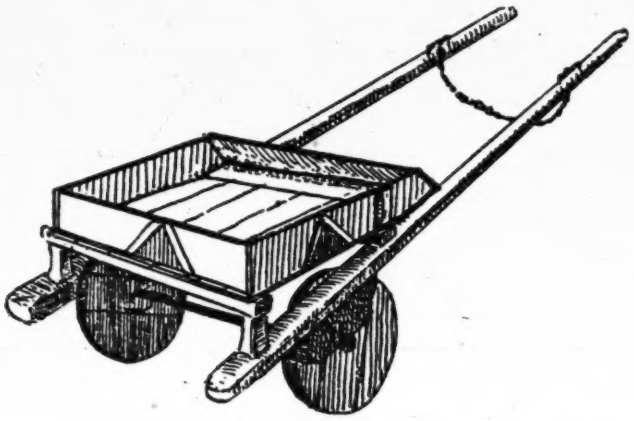

FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of
493 rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-
● [492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1] E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however, is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1] O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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CARS AND CARTS

492 Ireland has so often been symbolized by a bare-footed colleen bashfully hiding behind a creel-carrying donkey that it comes as a shock to discover that the animal is a relative novelty in the Irish scene. There is no evidence of the use of the ass as a beast of burden in Ireland until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Professor Mahaffy, who wrote learnedly 'On the Introduction of the Ass as a Beast of Burden into Ireland',[1] pointed out that the little donkey was conquering Hibernia when the Great Duke was subduing Iberia. In fact asses came in to replace the Irish horses which were being drawn on in large numbers to maintain the British cavalry in the peninsular wars. Although they were apparently introduced, like so many 177 other novelties, by way of Scotland, they proved unsuited to the 492 comparative rigours of the climate of the northern coasts of Ireland, and it was in the west of the country that they fitted best into the physical and social environment. It is strange to reflect that a culture-trait so well adapted to a region which has ancient physical and human relations with Iberia should have been so long in reaching Lusitanian Ireland and should have got there by the back door, through Ulster.

492 Down to recent times, then, the horse—a pony, not a heavy cart horse—was the universal draught animal and beast of 48 burden save where poverty or environmental difficulties imposed carrying duties on men, women and children. There were places such as soft bogs or slippery seashores where even pack-horses could not find a footing, and there went the women and children with their back-creels to carry the peats and sea-wrack. In spring, when the men were fully occupied with ridge-making, the transport of manure seems to have been the special task of the women, though in time the ass came to relieve them of this duty. The manure creels or pots (pardogs) of a fashion which has been recorded all along the Atlantic coastlands from Spain to Scotland, have a hinged or slip bottom which allows the load to be dropped where required (Fig. 56). Nowadays the creels are hung in pairs on the donkey's wooden straddle (pack saddle), and in the west it is no uncommon sight to see convoys of asses so laden picking their way from the dung-hill to the fields. I have also seen hay being transported by hanging

[1] *P.R.I.A.*, 33 (1916–17), 530–8.

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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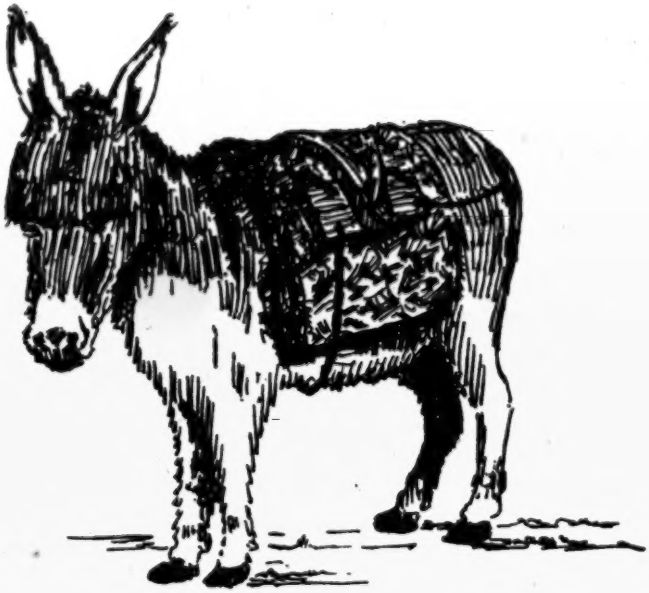

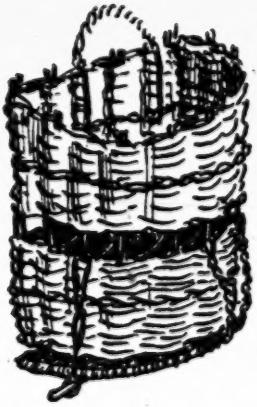

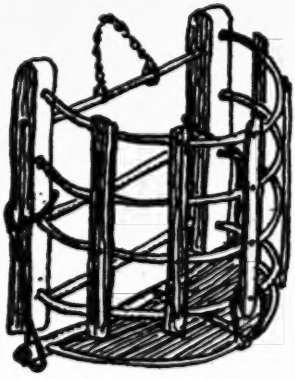

FIG. 56. Ass with straw pads and straddle, Co. Fermanagh. Creels with slip-bottoms for manure, Co. Galway and wrack, Co. Down.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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492 482 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

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493 483 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast, a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

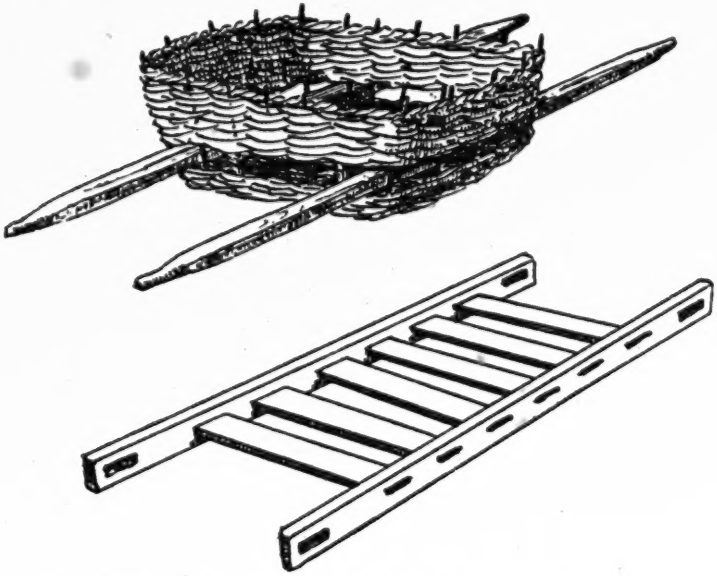

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the block wheel was independently invented in north-western Europe, or at least adapted from the log roller as a native response to the novelty of the spoked wheel.

A feature of the Ulster slide-cars which distinguishes them both from Scots and Welsh examples and from most other slide-cars is the provision of separate wooden runners or 'shoes' which are pegged to the ends of the shafts and can be replaced when worn out. They have the effect of reducing somewhat the slope of the platform and its load. Formerly a special slide-car was kept for carrying corn, the sheaves being supported by a hooped frame of osiers which finds parallels in Sweden and Finland. Another archaic feature was the harness, which was constructed, until quite recent times, entirely of wood, straw and withies (Fig. 69).

Slide-cars, 'strange survivals from the twilight of history',[1] are found not only in Highland Britain and the Baltic lands but in many parts of east central Europe, in Siberia, China, Siam and the Indian Deccan. Such a distribution points to a dispersal in high antiquity, probably from western Asia. There is no direct archaeological evidence of ancient slide-cars but it has been plausibly argued that the well-known 'cart tracks' of Malta were made by slide-cars some 3,000 years ago.[2] This humble vehicle is well suited to simple societies, whose transport needs are few, and to country, especially hilly country, without made roads, where the wheel would be out of place.

In Ireland the wheel-car clings to the same districts as the slide-car and serves much the same purpose, but it may occasionally be used for longer journeys by road, for example to take an animal to the fair. (Slide-cars are very injurious to roads and were driven off them by ordinances against their use on the highways). On steep slopes the wheels, being secured to a rotating axle, act as a brake on each other. Measuring only some two feet in diameter, they are composed of three segments of wood dowelled together as in the oldest known Mesopotamian wheels, and shod with an iron hoop. They revolve under the car inside the shafts, so that the body must be raised to give clearance. It is supported by vertical struts morticed into the

[1] A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (1898), 161.
[2] H. S. Gracie, *Antiquity* (1954), 91–98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts.

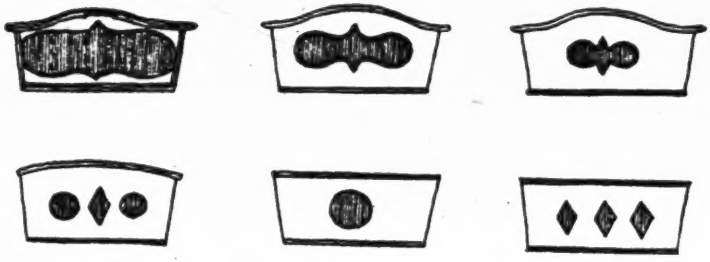

FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved

[1] W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, loc. cit.

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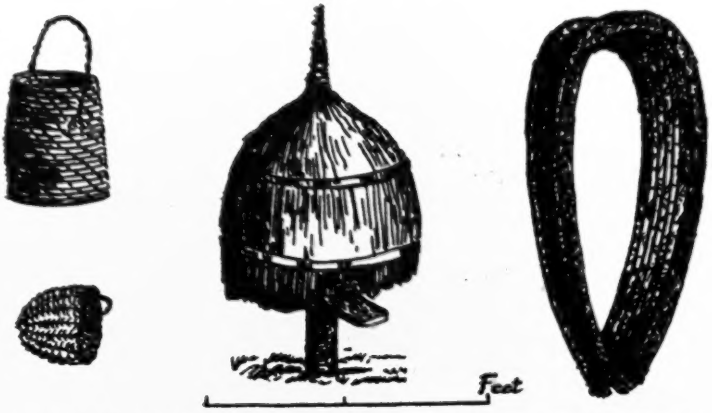

FIG. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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hanging skins, carpets or tapestries of other cultures. Today the most familiar use of the plaited mats is as creel mats on the backs of asses (Fig. 56). When creels are dispensed with and the load is placed directly on the ass a simple 'sugan' is sometimes made—a ring of straw some fifteen inches in diameter bound with a fine straw rope. This is a variant of the head-wreath once widely worn in western Europe as a carrying pad. Straw collars—made entirely of straw and not merely straw-stuffed—have so recently gone out of use that I have seen several decayed specimens on hill farms in the north, and the art of making them is not forgotten. In their construction several oval rings of three-strand straw plait are stitched together (Fig. 69). Unlike the ordinary Irish horse collar, they are, of course, not made to open; they were carefully shaped to hold flattish wooden hames.

Many varieties of baskets of straw rushes and other pliant materials which were once made in the homes are now known only by name: for example, the puckan of built-up plaiting which held seed potatoes in Co. Down, or, hung in the stable, served as a nest for pigeons. They had short lives, and few specimens have survived, so that we shall never know the full range of such domestic skills. On the other hand fancy basket work, using both whole and split fine sally rods, has probably long been a specialized craft, and has clung to certain districts such as the shores of Lough Neagh and the Suir Valley. As in these areas so all around the coasts of the island it is a craft which accompanies fishing skills. The long-line fishermen of the sea coasts have traditionally made their own line and fish baskets, but it is only inland communities such as those mentioned who have become commercial basket-makers, possibly because their fishing was more seasonal than that of the sea folk. Their products are now mainly baskets for carrying potatoes or turf (Fig. 71). In a special class are the large creels and carrying baskets made of hazel or black sally which were generally employed for farm transport before wheeled carts were adopted. In many districts these were made by itinerant creel-makers who were held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and the tinker. The method of construction, in which the standard rods are stuck upright in the ground, stamps the craft as being of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters, when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]